



## State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

August 27, 2008

Michael Morgan, Secretary  
Department of Administration  
101 East Wilson Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53707-7864

Dear Secretary Morgan:

In a letter I sent you on May 2, 2007, I expressed strong support of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for language in the governor's 2007-09 budget allocating federal E-rate funds to the Department of Administration's (DOA) TEACH program. The additional funds were to help subsidize increased school and library Internet bandwidth on the BadgerNet Converged Network. I was pleased to see that this language was in the final budget bill passed in October of last year. After this increase in TEACH funding, more than 60 percent of our state's public libraries and many of our public schools received additional bandwidth funded by TEACH. On behalf of our schools and libraries, let me express my thanks for your support on this issue.

Now that state agencies are developing their 2009-11 budgets, I again encourage you to ensure that the TEACH program will have adequate funds to continue providing BadgerNet subsidies to our schools and libraries during the next biennium. In May of this year, I, along with the Council on Library and Network Development, sponsored a two-day Visioning Summit on the future of libraries. One of the key *Strategic Directions* resulting from this summit was that libraries and educational institutions "must have access to sufficient bandwidth by 2010." This need was further emphasized at an August 7 meeting of the BadgerNet Advisory Council. The council met with Oskar Anderson, Administrator of the Division of Enterprise Technology, and Bruce Vande Zande from the TEACH program. A major conclusion from the meeting was that the dramatic growth in Internet bandwidth will continue for the foreseeable future. Thus, many schools and libraries will be asking TEACH for more bandwidth subsidies in the next biennium.

On a related issue, the August 7 meeting of the BadgerNet Advisory Council also reviewed several restrictions on the use of TEACH subsidized circuits. For example, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) cannot be used and in some circumstances the video streaming of school-related activities, such as athletic events, is also prohibited. I understand Division of Enterprise Technology staff are reviewing these issues to determine if the restrictions on TEACH circuits are statutory or regulatory in nature. From a broader perspective, the Internet has infused itself into almost all facets of our school and library operations, and it is critical to student learning and library patron access to information. Therefore, DPI supports the broadest use of TEACH subsidized circuits. We think local schools and libraries are in the best position to determine what Internet-based services or applications they need based on their local circumstances.

In summary, the DPI appreciates the increased TEACH funding in the 2007-09 budget and requests that the Department of Administration take whatever measures are needed to ensure an adequate TEACH budget in the next biennium to meet the increasing bandwidth needs of our schools and libraries. We also hope DOA will take any needed action to ensure the broadest use of TEACH circuits. Please keep me informed of any developments on these important issues and let me know if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Burmaster  
State Superintendent

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cc: Oskar Anderson, Administrator, Division of Enterprise Technology  
Bruce Vande Zande, Manager, DOA TEACH program